

HF Happenings 775



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The Great War

The Welland Valley Amateur Radio Society will host a series of special event stations in 2018 to mark the end of World War I and in remembrance of the millions who were killed or wounded. A total of twelve special call signs have been applied for and will be put on air during the year - GB1GW (January), GB1FWW (February), GB2GW (March), GB2FWW (April), GB4GW (May), GB4FWW (June), GB5GW (July), GB5FWW (August), GB6GW (September), GB6FWW (October) and GB8GW (November), plus GB0AD on 10 and 11 November to mark Armistice Day. Visit <http://www.qrz.com/db/GB1GW> for QSLing options and details about the certificates available for contacting the special call signs.

From a South African perspective. South Africa entered WWI on 8 September 1914 on the side of the Allied Forces.

The Battle of Delville Wood

On Saturday 15 July 1916, the SA Infantry Brigade under Major-General Tim Lukin was ordered to clear the wood at d'Elville, north-east of the village of Longueval, France, of enemy soldiers, thereby covering the flanks of the British Brigade. The South Africans occupied the wood on that day, but the problem was not so much to take the wood, but to hold it. Despite fierce counterattacks and artillery bombardments from German divisions, the SA brigade refused to surrender. The brigade was relieved on 20 July after six days and five nights of ferocious fighting. Only 750 soldiers remained of the Brigade's 3 433 soldiers, the rest had either been killed or wounded. Black South Africans were also involved in this battle as unarmed combatants and non-military personnel. The Battle of Delville Wood went down in the history of WWI as an example of supreme sacrifice and heroism and remained the costliest action the South African Brigade fought on the Western Front.

The sinking of the SS Mendi

At 05:00 on 21 February 1917, in thick fog about 10 nautical miles (19 km) south of St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company cargo ship Darro accidentally rammed Mendi's starboard quarter, breaching her forward hold. Darro was an 11 484 GRT ship, much larger than Mendi, sailing in

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December

1 – start of the YOTA Month; birth of the prophet
3 - SARL Digital Contest; Day for Disabled Persons
6 – all schools close
9 and 10 – ARRL 10 metre contest
13 to 20 – Chanukah
16 – Day of Reconciliation
21 – Summer Solstice
24 – Christmas Eve
25 – Christmas Day
26 – Family Day
27 - closing date for January 2018 Radio ZS
31 - End of 2017 CQ Marathon and YOTA month

January 2018

1 – New Year's Day; start of the 2018 CQ DX Marathon and the ARRL International Grid Chase
6 – Pretoria ARC Flea Market
13 and 14 – Hunting Lions in the Air
17 – Provincial school open
19 to 21 – PEARS National VHF/UHF Contest
20 - SDR Workshop at the NARC
25 – Closing date for the February Radio ZS
27 - Summer QRP contest; Cape Town ARC meeting; International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
30 - Closing date for proposals and synopsis for AMSAT SA Space Symposium papers
31 - Closing date for Nominations for Council, SARL Awards and AGM Motions

ballast to Argentina to load meat. Darro survived the collision but Mendi sank, killing 616 Southern Africans - 607 black troops and 30 crew

The Battle of Square Hill

18 and 19 September 1918 - the Battle of Square Hill is where the Cape Corps soldiers were able to shine as soldiers in their first battle with Turkish soldiers in Palestine during the First World War. This battle was motivated by General Allenby's military strategy to connect with Arab allies to the east of the Dead Sea, a mission that was thwarted by the 'enemy's' control of the Jordan crossing at Jisr-ed-Dameh. Captain Ivor D Difford, quartermaster of the Cape Corps has written that General Allenby was 'determined to strike a blow west of the Jordan, where the whole Turkish army in that area was enclosed'. To this end the plan was to 'break through the enemy's defensive positions and create a gap for the cavalry to pass through'.

Here is an opportunity for a radio club to be active during 2018 with a special call sign, maybe ZS9GW or ZS9WWI, to commemorate the South African participation in the Great War.

ZT1T until 12th Night

We will be operating ZT1T over Christmas once again. The unique prefix/special call sign will be used to celebrate our 7th Xmas on terra firma after being rescued mid-South Atlantic.

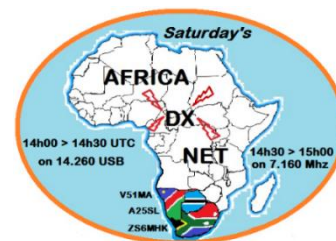
The station will be on 40 m (7,165 MHz +/-) and 20 m (14,205 MHz +/-) most days. We will also monitor PSK31 on 18 MHz. Transmissions will be 04:00 to 07:00 UTC on 40 m short path and then 20 m. Long path 20 m if the band is open from 12:00 to 13:30 UTC and 40 m around 16:00 UTC. Then 20 m into Europe and North America for evening traffic.

This station will take e-mail requests for skeds. This will depend on propagation. For example, Europe is workable on 20 m during the mornings. We are especially looking for Arkansas, North Dakota and Vermont for LOTW confirmations for WAS on 40 m. E-mail zt1tzs1afs@gmail.com for more info and skeds.



African DX

Senegal, 6W. Once again Earl, WA3DX, will be touring Senegal between 25 December and 12 January and will be active holiday style as 6W1/WA3DX from Dakar, as 6W7/WA3DX from Mbao and as 6W6/WA3DX from Kaolack and the Saloum Islands (not IOTA). He will operate SSB, PSK and SSTV on 40 to 10 metres. QSL direct to WA3DX.



African Islands

IOTA frequencies

CW: 28 040 24 920 21 040 18 098 14 040 10 114 7 030 3 530 kHz

SSB: 28 560 28 460 24 950 21 260 18 128 14 260 7 055 3 760 kHz

Radio Anniversaries Abound in December

December is the month in which three notable events in radio history occurred - the first radio transmission heard across the Atlantic Ocean in 1901, the first broadcast of the human voice and music in 1906 and the first successful transatlantic Amateur Radio HF transmissions in 1921.

On 12 December 1901, Italian wireless pioneer Guglielmo Marconi succeeded in receiving the first transatlantic radio signal, transmitted from Poldhu, in Cornwall, England, to St John's, Newfoundland, Canada. Marconi's team in Cornwall transmitted the letter "S" in Morse code and this was heard by Marconi and his assistant George Kemp at a facility set up in Cabot Tower on Signal Hill in St John's. On the Cornwall side, Marconi had erected a powerful spark-gap transmitter feeding a massive antenna. The receiving team used a kite antenna. The experiment proved that radio signals could be transmitted beyond the line of sight, opening the door to global wireless communication.



An article in the December 2007 issue of QST suggested that absorption may have been less in 1901 than in the 21st century, perhaps contributing to the success of the feat, which occurred during daylight on the Canadian end.

On Christmas Eve 1906, experimenter Reginald Fessenden made what may have been the first radio broadcast to include speech and music. The transmission originated at Brant Rock, Massachusetts, about 30 miles from Boston.

As he's done in year's past, Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, of Forest, Virginia, will commemorate that first audio broadcast by operating WI2XLQ on 486 kHz this month, marking the 111th anniversary of the Fessenden's accomplishment. Historic accounts say Fessenden played the violin - or a recording of violin music - and read a brief Bible verse, astounding radio experimenters and shipboard operators who heard the broadcast.

"Since we now have an amateur band on 630 metres, I will have a shorter transmission period this year that will only cover the Christmas holiday," Justin told the ARRL. That is because he hopes to be active on the new band himself.

Justin will begin his transmission on 24 December at 17:00 UTC and continue until 26 December 26 at 16:59 UTC. For his transmitter in 1906, Fessenden used an AC alternator modulated by placing carbon microphones in series with the antenna feed line. Justin's homebuilt station is slightly more modern, based on a 1921 vacuum tube master oscillator power amplifier (MOPA) design, using a UV-202 tube. The transmitter employs Heising AM modulation, developed by Raymond Heising during World War I.



In 1921, ARRL sponsored two series of transatlantic tests to see if signals from previously qualified Amateur Radio stations could be heard at a receiving station in Ardrossan, Scotland. The second series succeeded, with several amateur stations heard on the receiving end, using equipment far superior to what had been available to Marconi just 20 years earlier. "The Story of the Transatlantics" chronicled the events in the February 1922 issue of QST, to great fanfare www.arrl.org/files/file/History/History%20of%20QST%20Volume%201%20-%20Technology/QS02-22-TransAtlantic.pdf. As Mike Marinaro, WN1M, recounted in "The Transatlantic Tests," in the May 2014 issue of QST www.arrl.org/files/file/QST/This%20Month%20in%20QST/May%202014/MARINARO.pdf, the first signal "unofficially" heard in Scotland was actually that of a pirate, identifying as 1AW and not using the prearranged transmission format.

The "rough listening post" in Scotland, staffed by receiver designer Paul Godley, ZZE, and D.E. Pearson of the Marconi Company, was equipped with a superheterodyne and regenerative receiver connected to a 1 300-foot (396 m) Beverage antenna, 12 feet (3,6 m) above ground.

On 10 December, the CW signals of official entry 1BCG, owned by Minton Cronkhite, "were solidly heard on 230 to 235 metres," Marinaro wrote in 2014. "This signal derived from the specially designed and constructed station of the Radio Club of America at Greenwich, Connecticut -- the only station heard that morning."

Connecticut radio amateur and radio history buff Clark Burgard, N1BCG, will be among those celebrating the 96th anniversary of the first transatlantic shortwave transmission in Greenwich, Connecticut. Several other stations will take part by establishing contacts between the US and Europe, including GM7VSB in Ardrossan, Scotland.

No specific bands and frequencies were set in advance, in order to "permit flexibility due to propagation." Burgard has posted additional information on his QRZ.com profile page www.qrz.com/db/N1BCG

Chris Codella, W2PA, provides additional radio history on his "Ham Radio History" web site <http://w2pa.net/HRH/crossingsi-aquitania>.

Items used with acknowledgement to the ARRL Letter, the ARRL DX News, the ARRL Contest Update, OPDX Bulletin, 425 DX Bulletin, DXNL Newsletter, WIA-News, the RSGB News, DxCoffee, Southgate ARC News, DX World and the Amateur Radio Newsletter